

EM SSAB CHAIRS
Bi-Monthly Conference Call
Thursday, November 29, 2007
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Participants

Chairs/Representatives:

Idaho	No participants
Nevada	Rosemary Rehfeldt, Kelly Snyder
NNM	Fran Berting, J.D. Campbell
Oak Ridge	Spencer Gross, Pat Halsey, Ron Murphree, Pete Osborne
Paducah	William (Allen) Burnett, Mitch Hicks, Eric Roberts, Kim Crenshaw
Richland/Hanford	Shelly Cimon, Susan Leckband, Karen Lutz, Cathy McCague
Savannah River	Donna Antonucci, Gerri Flemming, Sheron Smith

DOE representatives:

EM-13	Melissa Nielson, Doug Frost
EM-12	Christine Gelles
EM-20	Mark Gilbertson
CI	Betty Nolan

OPENING REMARKS

Doug Frost welcomed participants to the conference call. In his review of the agenda, Mr. Frost noted that Cindy Rheume, Director for the Office of Budget, would not be able to participate.

Waste Disposition Strategies Update

Christine Gelles, Director for the Office of Disposal Operations (EM-12), reported that EM has recently initiated a lifecycle waste forecast update which will produce the next data set for the program's Waste Information Management System. The updated data set should be available to the public in either March or April 2008 and will reflect the EM sites' five-year planning documents and out-year targets.

EM-12 is also in the process of updating its National Waste Disposition Strategy in order to incorporate the comments received from stakeholders and DOE managers. Ms. Gelles expects a revised version to be available to the public for review in early 2008 through the EM website, www.em.doe.gov.

In addition to the National Waste Disposition Strategy, EM-12 is currently reviewing guidance to standardize the sites' methodology for evaluating the costs of disposal alternatives. Ms. Gelles explained that the guidance document was developed in response to the concerns expressed in the Government Accountability Office's 2005 report on how DOE uses cost-benefit analyses to make disposal decisions for low-level waste (LLW) and mixed low-level waste (MLLW). The final guidance document will provide a set of common tools and updated DOE Headquarters (HQ) oversight responsibilities for EM and the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Health, Safety and Security. Ms. Gelles also noted that the document may be entered into the Department's directives review system.

Ms. Gelles related the status of a number of other significant waste management activities.

The program is nearing its 100th remote-handled transuranic (TRU) waste shipment and has fully utilized its pipeline to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) this year.

EM continues to optimize its use of the Nevada Test Site (NTS) as a regional disposal facility. Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 was the first year that NTS's operational waste disposal costs were directly funded by EM in full. The program is carefully monitoring that arrangement to determine how its revised funding approach affects the consistency and sustainability of disposal activities throughout the year.

Hanford remains unavailable for off-site waste shipments pending the completion of its Tank Closure and Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement (TCWM EIS) for tank closure. EM expects the draft TCWM EIS will be published for public review in early 2008.

EM has drafted and shared a NEPA Supplement Analysis (SA) for the disposal of depleted uranium hexafluoride conversion products at NTS. Pending the resolution of a number of comments and legal concerns, the program will issue a final SA. In the meantime, the Office of Transportation has continued to proceed with its planning, and expects to brief the public in January.

NTS is also working on a five-year supplement to its site-wide EIS and performing data analyses to ensure that off-site and out-year waste streams are fully evaluated.

With regard to the topic of validated baselines, Susan Leckband of Hanford asked about how the baselines and five-year planning documents were tied to the revised lifecycle waste forecasts.

Ms. Gelles explained that EM-12 will not know the impact of the validated baselines until it reviews the revised lifecycle waste forecasts. However, it does keep all of the data sets on file and intends to perform a similar analysis once the new data set has been established. Ms. Gelles noted that EM may tailor its methodology for reporting waste volumes due to the fact that the validated baselines have not been fully approved by

management. It should not be a foregone conclusion that the adjusted baselines will dictate EM's execution plans. The updated lifecycle waste forecast data sets will serve as a tool for management to assess the baselines and determine if they truly reflect the priorities that EM wants and needs to pursue.

Allen Burnett of Paducah noted that when the EM SSAB visited NTS, he was given the impression that the site expected to stop accepting off-site waste shipments for disposal in the reasonably near future.

Ms. Gelles explained that the State of Nevada, and specifically its Attorney General, has expressed concerns regarding DOE's legal authority to continue regional off-site disposal operations under the existing administrative land withdrawals. EM is currently addressing those concerns with its General Counsel. Regardless of the legal issues, the operation of NTS as a regional LLW disposal facility is expected to continue indefinitely. However, Ms. Gelles noted that NTS's MLLW acceptance is contingent upon a single trench that is currently in a closure period. Under the terms of the site's RCRA permit, the trench will cease to receive MLLW by November 2010 and will then be permanently closed and capped. EM will need to identify another facility and/or site for off-site MLLW disposal beyond November 2010, and is currently reviewing a number of alternatives.

Shelly Cimon asked for clarification regarding where the MLLW shipments originate from and for how long that campaign is expected to continue.

Ms. Gelles explained that there are approximately a dozen potential MLLW generators that ship to NTS, including Idaho, Oak Ridge, and some smaller commercial treatment streams. As previously stated, NTS will continue to accept MLLW through November 2010. EM will continue to evaluate alternatives for disposal beyond that date.

Engineering & Technology Update (Groundwater Database)

Mark Gilbertson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Engineering and Technology (EM-20), reported that his office has developed a Groundwater Database and discussed its content and applications.

The Groundwater Database was created to facilitate a greater understanding of EM's complex-wide groundwater contamination issues, including the volume of affected groundwater plumes, the range of settings, and the diversity of contaminants. It is a high-level document that provides a snapshot in time of major groundwater contamination and remedial actions, identifying 60 different plumes at six EM sites, with the exception of Los Alamos where plumes are still being characterized and delineated.

Mr. Gilbertson described multiple components of the Groundwater Database, such as plume maps, plume assessments, and technical site summaries among others.

- Plume maps are high-level visualizations of the groundwater information for each site that illustrate the location and extent of groundwater contamination.
- Plume assessments are consumer report-style depictions of groundwater contamination and plume treatments identified at a particular site. The information is categorized to summarize the following: site name, contractor, plume area, project number, major contaminants, plume size and general category, and source status (is the source active and/or controlled?).
- Plume status is further categorized in a stop-light depiction where red signifies plumes with contaminants that are either off site or projected to migrate off site; yellow signifies plumes that are expanding but not expected to migrate off site; and green signifies plumes that are either static or shrinking in size.

The Groundwater Database also summarizes the regulatory status of plumes from a technical perspective as to whether groundwater assessments are ongoing, remedial approaches have been proposed, or if there is a decision document in place. Treatment status is categorized in an additional stop-light depiction where red signifies that remedial approaches are not performing as identified in the decision document; yellow signifies that remedial approaches are not performing optimally; and green signifies that remedial approaches are performing as identified in the decision document.

Furthermore, the Groundwater Database identifies technology and external review needs in addition to areas where there are opportunities to improve remediation activities and approaches.

As previously discussed, the Groundwater Database was created as a snapshot in time, and as such should not be taken out of context. Mr. Gilbertson encouraged those interested in reviewing the database and receiving the information it contains to make arrangements with his office and/or their particular sites to talk through the document together and ask questions real-time.

Pat Halsey of Oak Ridge asked what EM-20 planned to do with the information gathered through the Groundwater Database.

Mr. Gilbertson explained that the database will be used to build synergy across the EM's technical community and encourage cross-site integration and cooperation. DOE-HQ will be able to use the database as a tool to understand its groundwater issues complex-wide and determine how and where to optimize its technology development investments.

Ms. Cimon of Hanford asked if the Groundwater Database would be used in tandem with the previously distributed Engineering and Technology Roadmap.

Mr. Gilbertson noted that although the Groundwater Database is not tied directly to the Engineering and Technology Roadmap, it is part of an effort to facilitate greater programmatic understanding, transparency, and collaboration. Mr. Gilbertson further explained that the Roadmap is a guiding document or framework for the development of

larger strategic initiatives aimed at reducing the technical risk and uncertainty associated with the EM program.

Ms. Leckband suggested that the EM SSAB should include an Engineering and Technology update on the agenda for its spring 2008 meeting in order to discuss the Groundwater Database and Roadmap and better understand how these programmatic documents fit together.

Ms. Cimon indicated that the Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) would take Mr. Gilbertson up on his offer to talk through the Groundwater Database.

Mr. Gilbertson agreed and noted that EM-20 will contact the Office of River Protection and Richland Operations to facilitate the dialogue.

Congressional Update

With respect to the FY 2008 budget, Betty Nolan from the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs reported that EM will operate under a Continuing Resolution until December 14.

Congress is officially in a recess period and will return to session on December 4. In the meantime, the appropriations committee staff is working hard to pull together a final budget for FY 2008. In all likelihood, there will be multiple omnibus bills, the first of which will contain appropriations for as many as three or four agencies. Ms. Nolan noted that DOE is expected to be included in the first omnibus and will likely have a budget before the holidays. However, she cautioned that funding is very tight and there are enormous discrepancies between the levels proposed by the House and the Senate. There is no indication as to how that conflict will be resolved or how the final numbers will ultimately be managed.

Around the Complex:

Nevada – Kelly Snyder

- The NTS Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB) held its last full board meeting of 2007 in the beginning of November.
 - Public turn-out was very low compared to past meetings in rural areas; therefore, the CAB will hold its next two meetings in rural areas to encourage interest in its groundwater recommendations.

Northern New Mexico – J.D. Campbell

- The Northern New Mexico CAB held a full board meeting on November 28.
- The existing 12-member CAB anticipates 13 new membership appointments in the near future and looks forward to moving ahead as a larger board.

- Upcoming points of interest include the CAB's participation in quarterly groundwater forums, the first of which will take place in January, and continued planning for April's disposal site closure activities.

Oak Ridge – Ron Murphree

- The Oak Ridge board held a meeting on November 14 and will meet again on December 12 to discuss such topics as the Decontamination and Decommissioning of the K-25 and K-27 facilities, which comprise nearly two thirds of EM's Oak Ridge funding.
- There is an ongoing controversy between DOE and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) regarding slippage in cleanup activities – specifically those associated with the Molten Salt Reactor Experiment. TDEC may consider levying fines as it is not willing to release DOE from its previously agreed upon milestones.

Paducah – Allen Burnett

- The Paducah CAB held a full board meeting on November 15 and has scheduled a working committee session for December 6.
- With regard to membership, the CAB has received one new application for review.
- The CAB has received information on the implementation plan for PCB removal from site's C-400 facility. It appears that DOE has incorporated recommendations from its independent review team, which may impact the cost and schedule of the PCB removal, but may also lead to an approved implementation plan.
- The CAB is working with a private contractor to gain access to the site's data warehouse in order to better understand the end state vision for Paducah.
- The CAB has submitted two recommendations to DOE regarding nickel disposition, with at least one additional recommendation under development.
- During the Board's last meeting, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported that based on its lawsuit at Hanford, it has determined that regulation at contamination sources is appropriate, rather than just at the site's boundaries. The ramifications of this determination are still unfolding but may affect other sites besides Paducah.
- DOE, EPA, and the State will meet during the first quarter of 2008 to discuss the potential establishment of an on-site disposal facility for Paducah.
- Following Assistant Secretary Rispoli's presentation to the EM SSAB Chairs in September, the CAB has been trying to collect information on EM's newly established communications office without success.
 - Melissa Nielson, Director for the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Accountability (EM-13) explained that the communications office has not been officially approved by management and remains under development.

In the meantime, the best conduits for communications support are local Public Affairs offices.

- The CAB consulted its Deputy Designated Federal Officer, Reinhard Knerr, and Site Manager, Bill Murphie, regarding the EM Quarterly Project Reviews (QPRs). However, feedback indicates that the Field offices are still trying to determine what level of QPR information is appropriate for the EM SSAB and stakeholder community.
 - Ms. Nielson explained that this issue was raised during EM's recent leadership team meeting in Cincinnati, OH. She is in contact with HQ personnel regarding the development of uniform guidance for the Field as to what constitutes the appropriate level of information. If this issue is not resolved before the Chairs' April meeting, the EM SSAB may want to consider drafting a letter to the Assistant Secretary asking for uniform Field guidance, similar to that distributed for stakeholder input on the EM budget process last year.
- All signatures for the EM SSAB Chairs' products from the September meeting have been collected and should be issued by the end of November.

Richland – Susan Leckband

- The HAB held a meeting in early November which resulted in two recommendations pertaining to the EM budget and the ongoing Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) negotiations.
 - The HAB is concerned because the TPA negotiation's proposals will significantly delay some of Hanford's major cleanup missions.
- Currently, Hanford is holding "State of the Site" meetings around the region.
- Hanford will hold a public budget workshop in early 2008; however, the schedule is tentative until EM issues its revised budget guidance for stakeholder involvement to the Field offices.
- Hanford does not have a validated baseline at this time, but the HAB expects the baseline to go to Assistant Secretary Rispoli for review in December.
- Construction on the Vitrification Plant has resumed following the resolution of the site's seismic concerns.
- Although the HAB has not received official word, it believes that off-site plutonium shipments have begun, following the State's approval, which was received in early fall.
- There are still three major cleanup contracts out for the Hanford site; the HAB expects the contracts to be awarded early next year.

Savannah River – Donna Antonucci

- The Savannah River Site (SRS) CAB met on November 26 and 27 and received information regarding the site's new Managing and Operating contract.

- The CAB recently held officer elections. Ms. Antonucci is now the SRS CAB's Chair, and Ranowul Jzar is the Vice Chair.
- The CAB is pleased to report that the tank closure dispute between EPA and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control has been resolved, resulting in a good schedule with achievable closure goals.
- The CAB recently approved four recommendations regarding the topics of (1) budget impacts on the site's TRU waste shipments to WIPP; (2) becoming familiar with the DOE budget process; (3) plutonium consolidation and developing a final disposition plan for the plutonium shipped to SRS for interim storage; and (4) the dissolution of the Savannah River Ecology Lab, its legacy, and the status of its records and ongoing studies.
- On January 18, 2008, the CAB will participate in a workshop on the site's P Reactor to learn more about the process of decommissioning the facility.

Planning Committee for Spring Chairs Meeting (Hanford)

The planning committee for the Chairs' spring meeting will include Ms. Leckband, Ms. Cimon, Ms. Antonucci, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Burnett in addition to Eric Roberts of Paducah and Karen Lutz and Erik Olds of Hanford.

Mr. Frost and Ms. Leckband encouraged the conference call participants to submit suggestions and topics for the spring meeting's agenda in advance.

The planning committee's first conference call is scheduled for December 6 at 3:00 pm EST.

Closing Remarks

Ms. Nielson reminded the conference call participants that comments on the minutes from the special EM SSAB Chairs call on October 25 were due to HQ by close of business on December 7.

Minutes from the September EM SSAB Chairs meeting in Paducah, KY are due to be posted on the EM website by November 30.

With regard to the fall 2008 EM SSAB Chairs meeting, Ms. Nielson and Mr. Frost are working with a contractor to explore the possibility of holding the meeting in Washington D.C. Due to post September 11th security concerns, holding the meeting at the DOE-HQ Forrestal building is not a viable option, as it would hinder public access to the proceedings. Ms. Nielson also noted that EM must be sensitive to the costs of holding a public meeting in Washington D.C. and adhere to local per diem allotments. Therefore, the conference management contractor will look for facilities throughout the greater Washington D.C. Metro area, which may include Germantown, MD and the Dulles Corridor in Virginia.

Ms. Nielson suggested that while EM-13 and its contractor explore options, the SRS CAB follow a dual path and pursue arrangements locally in the event that logistics prevent the Board from meeting in Washington D.C. Both the SRS CAB and EM-13 should collect information and present their options during the next EM SSAB Chairs conference call in January.

The EM SSAB Charter expires in April 2008 and will need to be renewed for another two-year term. Prior to the January conference call, EM-13 will distribute the next iteration of the Charter for review.

Lastly, with the EM SSAB Chairs spring meeting scheduled for April 2008, Ms. Nielson asked the participants to consider whether or not they would like to hold their regularly scheduled bi-monthly conference call in March or forgo it until after the meeting at Hanford.

Mr. Frost thanked the participants for their time and wished all attendees a happy holiday.

The next EM SSAB Chairs' bi-monthly conference call is scheduled for January 31, 2008.